

Symposium in memory of Anne-Lise Christensen

Impact on Finnish neuropsychology

by Ritva Laaksonen

Anne-Lise Christensen's first contacts with Finnish neuropsychology date back to the 1970's. The interactions were based on previous personal contacts with Anna-Riitta Putkonen, the pioneer in Finnish neuropsychology. The joint interest in clinical work and the theoretical framework of A.R. Luria was the origin of later developments of life long collaboration and friendship with Anne-Lise. She soon became our role model for scientific interests and clinical practices. By the turn of the 1980's time was ripe for Nordic and wider international meetings in neuropsychology. Anne-Lise was a true cosmopolitan who brought together many international icons during her years at the Center for Brain Injury in Copenhagen. The empowering enthusiasm was the basis for continuous developments in approaches of neuropsychological investigation, rehabilitation and research. Due to Nordic collaboration the tradition of this meeting today was established. In Finland neuropsychology was included in University teaching programs and new rehabilitation settings emerged. The contributions of Anne-Lise's personality and several writings and texts have had deep-rooted influences in the present status in the many subspecialties of neuropsychology in Finland. She had a strong impact on holistic rehabilitation programs as well as new conceptualizations in neuropsychotherapy.

I personally have experienced Anne-Lise's influence and support in many ways. In the 1990's we participated European research projects of rehabilitation of memory: 1981-1982 we were members in the E.S.C.A.P.E./Biomed 1. in Germany. In 1993-1995 we continued in Biomed 1. 2nd phase in Germany and Cambridge, GB. The project leaders in respective countries were Reiner Kaschel and Barbara A. Wilson. During our traveling Anne-Lise and I had the possibility to strengthen our friendship beyond professional grounds. The final highlight was our joint conference trip to Hawaii in the first decade on 2000. Anne-Lise got honours for life-time work and I introduced her by the invitation of I.N.S.